

Oct. 3 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1996

standards and procedures that will help make transitional assistance programs fully responsive to the needs of battered women.

The Secretary of Health and Human Services is further directed to provide States with technical assistance as they work to implement the Family Violence provisions.

Finally, to more accurately study the scope of the problem, we should examine statutory rape, domestic violence, and sexual assault as threats to safety and barriers to self-sufficiency. I therefore direct the Attorney General and the Secretary of Health and Human Services to

make it a priority to understand the incidence of statutory rape, domestic violence, and sexual assault in the lives of poor families, and to recommend the best assessment, referral, and delivery models to improve safety and self-sufficiency for poor families who are victims of domestic violence.

I ask the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Attorney General to report to me in writing 90 days from the date of this memorandum on the specific progress that has been made toward these goals.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Message to the Congress Transmitting Transportation Department Reports October 3, 1996

To the Congress of the United States:

I transmit herewith the 1995 calendar year reports as prepared by the Department of Transportation on activities under the Highway Safety Act, the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966, and the Motor Vehicle

Information and Cost Savings Act of 1972, as amended.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 3, 1996.

Exchange With Reporters in Chautauqua, New York October 4, 1996

Middle East Peace Process

The President. Good morning, everyone.

Q. Is Christopher going to the Middle East this weekend, Mr. President?

The President. It's entirely possible. We discussed it, and I think he's probably finalized his plans by now. I told him that I wanted him to go there for the beginning of the talks, which start, as you know, on Sunday morning. And he's supposed to go to Africa, and I asked him not to cancel the trip to Africa but to go to the Middle East first. So I'm assuming that those plans were made and that he'll be there in the beginning.

Presidential Debate

Q. Mr. President, how's the debate training going, sir? And what makes you think you need much training after all the speeches you make

and the news conferences you've been through over the last 4 years?

The President. Debates are different, because it's not just answering tough questions. You—basically, there's the person you're debating, the other candidate, plus the interlocutor, plus the time constraints, so that really I'm—Senator Mitchell won last night. [*Laughter*] I am badly out of shape on this, but I'm trying to get better. And I woke up this morning and sort of massaged my bruises, and I'm ready to go at it again. [*Laughter*]

Presidential Pardons

Q. When Mr. Dole asks you whether you're going to give Whitewater pardons and why your administration has been clouded by ethical problems, what will your response be?

The President. Well, tune in tomorrow. I'm going to answer the same thing I have already.

There aren't any under consideration, and I haven't given any thought to giving any. That's not the issue. I just said I think that nobody should be singled out for special treatment one way or the other, including discrimination against them or discrimination in favor of them. There's a procedure for that that everyone follows, and there is absolutely no consideration being given to that.

Presidential Debate

Q. Sir, they tell us they are going to—

Q. Mr. President, do you expect Senator Dole to go on the attack? Do you expect Senator—

Q. —tell us that they're going to help you, in that sense, control your temper if you should get some of these. Is that a problem for you, do you think?

The President. No, but I think—what we do often is I give the answer I'd like to give, and then I go back and give the answer I should give if somebody takes a real broadside at me. [Laughter] No, we're—I think the most important thing is to remember that this debate is as much about the American people and their lives and their future as it is about Senator Dole and me. And so what I want to be able to do—and my objectives are fairly straightforward and basically quite simple—I want to make sure that the voters know what the record is, they know what the contrasts are between Senator Dole and me, and most important of all, that they know what I intend to do for the next 4 years. And then they can make up their own minds.

I think my goal here is to make sure that the people actually get something out of this debate other than just sort of an exercise in who does a better job in outwitting someone else. That's—I think it ought to be something that's genuinely informative, and I'm going to try to make it that way.

Press Secretary Mike McCurry. Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. Mr. President, the polls being the way they are, a lot of people are wondering how much importance this debate really is. What do you think?

The President. Oh, I think it's quite important. I think the American people care a lot about their country. I think they know we're going through a period of real, profound change, and that these decisions we're going to make in the

next couple of years will affect our country well into the 21st century.

1996 Election

Q. Do you think you're going to carry western New York, Chautauqua country, if you will?

The President. I hope so. I've met some awful nice people here who say they're working for us up here and trying to help us win here. It's unusual, as you know, for a Democrat to carry here, but I'm hoping we will, and I feel pretty good about it.

Presidential Debate

Q. Senator, is the President low-balling us when he tells us you beat him yesterday?

Former Senator George J. Mitchell. Well, I'll say—

The President. Tell the truth, George. You beat me like a drum. [Laughter] You kicked me all over the place last night. Tell the truth.

Senator Mitchell. Well, let me say this: I served as majority leader in the Senate for 6 years while Senator Dole was minority leader, so I debated him probably more than any other person, and I know just how effective he is. Senator Dole is a highly skilled debater, and I think he's going to be tough in this debate coming up on Sunday. But the President, I think, will do all right.

Q. Mr. President, what do you remember most from the debates 4 years ago? What sticks out in your mind—the last time you went through this?

The President. Oh, no question about it, the townhall debate, the citizens debate, and the richness and variety and the relevance of the questions that the citizens asked, and how little they were into politics and positioning and how much they were into the substance of their own lives and the future. I was very, very impressed by the questions that the American people asked who were part of that debate. That's the thing I will always remember.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:30 a.m. outside the Hotel Athenaeum. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.